

Idaho State Board of Education
GOVERNING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: III. POSTSECONDARY AFFAIRS

SUBSECTION: X. Outcomes Assessment

July 2008

X. Outcomes Assessment

1. Coverage

Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, and the University of Idaho are covered by these policies. North Idaho College, the College of Southern Idaho, and the College of Western Idaho are also covered since academic programs intended for transfer come under the purview of the Board.

2. Purpose

The State Board of Education realizes the importance of measuring student and program outcomes at its postsecondary educational institutions. Assessment is an integral part of existing program review procedures and accreditation self-studies; assessment complements other state initiated efforts to improve postsecondary education. Assessment also encourages the optimal use of public revenues dedicated to higher education.

The primary purpose of assessment is to enhance the quality and excellence of programs, learning, and teaching.

Additional purposes of assessment include increasing intra- and inter-departmental communication related to departmental and institutional goals and objectives and promoting faculty development. Finally, assessment should enhance the public perception of, and support for, postsecondary education and the diversity of institutional roles and missions.

3. Definitions

Assessment is the process of gathering data and assembling evidence into an interpretable form for some intended use. For the purposes of this policy, there are three (3) guiding principles:

- a. student assessment of programs should be included in the current program review process;
- b. assessment of student learning should occur in major fields of study as defined at the department level by each institution; and
- c. Student learning should be assessed in general education areas as defined by each institution.

4. Multiple Assessment Strategies

Each institution will develop an assessment plan that is consistent with its role and mission and that recognizes the diversity of its students. The assessment plan will deal with both general education and departmental major outcomes. However, assessment is more than just

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the measurement of students' abilities to perform on standardized tests. Institutions are encouraged to initiate multiple forms of student and program assessment.

Possible strategies include, but are not limited to, college entrance exams, diagnostic entrance/proficiency tests for placement, exit examinations, senior thesis or project, video tapes of student presentations/projects, external examination by faculty from other institutions, attitude surveys (affective as well as cognitive), exit interviews, standardized examinations (for example, National Teacher Examination, Certified Public Accountant, Medical College Admission Test, or Graduate Record Examination), employment information from graduates, and follow-up alumni and employer surveys.

5. Use of Data

- a. Students on each campus will be informed about the purposes and benefits of various assessment strategies so that they will understand the value of assessment. Any student participating in assessment activities will have access to his/her own assessment results. Data collected as a part of assessment will be subject to the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.
- b. Given the diversity of institutional roles and missions, programs, student populations, assessment strategies, and sampling techniques, assessment should not be used to compare institutions, to evaluate teachers, or to eliminate positions, programs, or departments.

6. Implementation Schedule

Annual report to Board on assessment procedures and implement any needed changes in procedures.

7. Financial Considerations

First year planning costs can and should be borne by the individual institutions. However, a long-term commitment to outcomes assessment for the second and ensuing year will require a significant financial commitment by the Board and the Legislature. The cost of outcomes assessment should not be borne solely by students.